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LETTER DATED 14 JANUARY 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE SUDAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I should like to draw your attention to the final report of the International Commission of Inquiry (Rwanda) (S/1998/1096) dated 18 November 1998, and, in particular, to paragraphs 18 and 20 thereof, where it is claimed that between 5,000 and 8,000 of the former Forces armées rwandaises (ex-FAR) and Interahamwe have been located in the southern Sudan and training in Juba, Amadi and Ngangala.

The Government of the Sudan generally and specifically denies the allegations put forward in the two aforementioned paragraphs, and wishes to make clear the following:

1. With regard to each of these allegations, that are derived from suspect sources in which the report itself makes clear little confidence is to be placed, the Commission states that it has not been able directly to verify the reports. We therefore feel justified in wondering how it can be proper for the Commission to relay dubious information and issue it in a Security Council document without having had it verified by independent sources, in particular since this information relates to grave and sensitive issues, namely, the violation of Security Council resolutions concerning the embargo on the sale of arms.

2. It is quite clear that Commission representatives visited camps belonging to the rebel movement in southern Sudan and obtained their information there. Naturally, since it serves the interests of the rebel movement to do so, it did not hesitate to level random accusations against the Sudanese Government, in the knowledge that with the exception of Juba, all the areas referred to in the report are under rebel control.

   The very numbers cited - the claim that there are between 5,000 and 8,000 ex-FAR in the city of Juba - give the allegation the lie. If it were true, it would surely have become obvious to the many different foreign sources and organizations working in that city.

The references made to the Sudan in this report are a vile attempt to drag it into the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in which the Government of the Sudan officially refused to become militarily involved. Furthermore, the Government of the Sudan has always strongly condemned, and continues to condemn, the crime of genocide perpetrated in Rwanda, in keeping with the Sudan's commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and the Charter of the Organization of African Unity.

The references in paragraphs 18 and 20 of the final report of the Commission make it clear that the Commission has exceeded its basic mandate, which was to collect information and investigate the illegal supply of arms to former Rwandan government forces in violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. The Commission has relayed information obtained from dubious sources as part of the testimony of the report, while affirming that it has not been able directly to verify that information.

The Government of the Sudan trusts that in future the Commission will be precise and objective, and ensure that it is in contact with the primary sources when allegations such as those which appear in its report are made, and that it will verify such allegations from the official authorities in the State concerned before publishing and presenting them as established fact.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mubarak Hussein RAHMTALLA
Chargé d'affaires a.i.